



# Media Fairness Initiative

## A Look at Bias in the News



### Public Supports Voter ID 1/29/08

**Two-thirds of Americans say voters should be required to show photo identification before voting, according to a new Fox 5/The Washington Times/ Rasmussen Reports poll.**



“Support for the concept is overwhelming,” said Scott Rasmussen, who conducted the poll. “What this number suggests to me is, it sounds like common sense in a society where you have to show ID to do just about anything.”

The survey comes as the voter ID clash is heating up, with several states considering photo identification requirements and with the recent Supreme Court debate regarding Indiana’s photo ID requirement.

**An Associated Press story from last month cast the Supreme Court case as “a partisan political drama.” Other national media reports have portrayed the voter ID issue as a strictly divided debate between Republicans and Democrats.**

**On the contrary, the poll found bipartisan support for showing identification, including 63 percent of Democrats and independents, as well as over three-fourths of Republicans.** In addition, 58 percent of African Americans, 69 percent of whites, and 66 percent of other ethnic or racial minorities backed the concept. Overall, 67 percent said they support requiring photo identification.

**No major newspapers featured the poll, except for *The Washington Times*.**

### Democrats Continue to Get More Coverage

A survey by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) found that **Democrats Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama both received more media coverage than any Republican candidate during the week of January 14-20, even though there were two close Republican primaries that week compared to just one Democratic race.**

An earlier study by Harvard University and the PEJ, a division of the nonpartisan Pew Research Center, found that **49 percent of all campaign stories involved Democratic candidates, while just 31 percent involved Republican candidates.** In addition, **Democratic presidential candidates received twice the amount of favorable coverage as Republicans,** and Hillary Clinton drew nearly twice the amount of media coverage as any Republican candidate.

### Media Misrepresent Bernanke’s Testimony

Despite the fact that Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke testified before Congress that the Fed was “not forecasting a recession,” national news reports indicated that he had done just the opposite.

The CBS Early Show featured a report that claimed “Bernanke confirmed recession fears.” The CBS Evening News reported that Bernanke “was telling Congress the economy needs a rescue package – and the sooner the better.” And the NBC Nightly News reported that “There is no shortage of evidence showing a U.S. economy either already in recession or heading there.”

By focusing only on part of Bernanke’s testimony, the national media continued to add to public nervousness about the economy.